

Department of State – Embassy of the United States, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Program Office:	Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Tajikistan
Funding Opportunity Title:	Democracy Commission Small Grants Program
Announcement Type:	Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number:	STI400-20-XX-XXX-TBDB
Deadline for Applications:	March 31, 2020 (11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern time)
CFDA:	19.900 – Assistance to Eastern Europe and Central Asia

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact
GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy Dushanbe Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available through the Embassy's Democracy Commission Small Grants Program. This program supports the development of Tajikistan's democratic institutions and civil society by competitively awarding small grants to Tajik nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and associations, to nonprofit civil society organizations (CSOs), and to independent local media organizations.

Background:

The U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (PAS) in Dushanbe is soliciting **Statements of Interest** from Tajik civil society and independent media organizations that focus on one of the priority areas specified below. Applicants should pay close attention to the Public Affairs Section's goals, priority program areas, target audiences, and geographic locations when developing their proposals. **Statements of Interest cannot exceed two pages.**

More information about Embassy Dushanbe's Democracy Commission can be found at: <https://tj.usembassy.gov/embassy/dushanbe/grant-programs/democracy-commission/>

This program will be funded under the Foreign Assistance Act authorization. All programming is subject to the statutory limitations of the funding determined.

Priority themes:

Economic/social empowerment, entrepreneurship, and skills development, particularly for women, youth and vulnerable populations to advance economic independence and sustainable development. (commercial activity or specific businesses/startups will not be considered)

- **Goal 1: Empower entrepreneurs to scale and market their small enterprises**
 - **Key Beneficiaries:** Seed entrepreneurs who have already tested ideas and started small-scale businesses, entrepreneurs who have NGOs
 - **Ideal Partners include but are not limited to:** Business incubators, business mentoring programs
 - **Examples include but are not limited to:**

- Programs that teach social media and other modern marketing skills to individual entrepreneurs and/or assists them with maintaining on online portal where customers can find, purchase, and order their products or services
- Programs that provide consultation and liaison services for entrepreneurs regarding their rights and regulations that apply to small businesses
- Programs that give business skills training and mentorship for emerging entrepreneurs
- Programs that assess the skill levels of target populations and individuals and the level of consumer demand for various goods and services they are capable of providing at a competitive cost

➤ **Goal 2: Provide workplace development skills for individuals from vulnerable or disadvantaged groups**

- **Key Beneficiaries:** Women and young adults ages 18 and above, in particular, unemployed youth, vulnerable women who are at risk of domestic violence, people with disabilities and their families, orphans, separated families (abandoned wives and children without a parent present)
- **Ideal partners include but are not limited to:** civil society, public/ non-government organizations
- **Examples include but are not limited to:**
 - Economic programs that facilitate vocational training and entrepreneurship skills
 - Programs that support or establish sustainable training institutions and enterprises that will regularly train and employ people from disadvantaged groups
 - Programs that help advertise and find consumers for independent entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups
 - Programs that help employers understand the importance and value of hiring people with disabilities and members of other vulnerable groups
 - Programs that offer skills training and counseling to vulnerable groups
 - Programs that help new entrepreneurs develop successful business models, market their products, understand customer preferences, and distribute their products
 - Programs that involve successful businesspeople as speakers to inspire people from vulnerable groups to become entrepreneurs
- **Countering violent extremism by promoting pluralism and tolerance,** Worldwide, individuals at risk for recruitment to violent extremism are those who experience a sense of frustration, marginalization, and disempowerment and seek out remedies, including, but not limited to extremist groups. Grievances, along with deceptive extremist recruitment techniques, create an environment that enables violent extremism. Through these awards, PAS Tajikistan seeks to support organizations that work with their

communities to understand and resolve problems in society that contribute to radicalization.

- **Goal:** Reduce the severity and scope of societal problems that lead to radicalization and violent extremism
 - **Key Beneficiaries:** Young adults aged 16-35, districts with high levels of out-migration and separated families, districts which were the source of a relatively high number of foreign terrorist fighters, religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, professors, parents of at-risk youth, orphans, refugees
 - **Ideal partners include but are not limited to:** Non-governmental organizations with experience in countering or preventing violent extremism
 - **Examples include but are not limited to:**
 - Programs that target individuals with grievances and help them pursue non-violent solutions or strategies to address the problems.
 - Programs that empower community-level dialogues over problems or grievances and empower communities to advance local solutions
 - Programs that focus on educating the public on early warning signs of violent radicalization, which engage family members of individuals who have gone to fight in foreign conflicts or become radicalized
 - Multi-media informational campaigns that warn vulnerable groups about the realities and consequences of engaging in violent extremism (through traditional and social media, radio, video, theater, film, documentary, booklets, comic books, video clips, etc.)
 - Multi-media campaigns that promote moderate ideas, quotes, and leaders, as well as peaceful resolution of conflicts
 - Programs that offer consultation services to vulnerable groups at risk of radicalization
- **Promoting free flow of accurate information on important issues in Tajikistan's society through the development of independent, professional, and amateur journalism**
 - **Goal 1:** Counter disinformation and promote awareness of important issues in Tajik society through improving media literacy, journalistic skills, and attract more engaged citizens to the field of journalism
 - **Key Beneficiaries:** students and youth, journalists and others working in the sphere of journalism
 - **Ideal partners include but are not limited to:** Non-governmental organizations
 - **Examples include but are not limited to:**

- Programs that train professional journalists and regular citizens on various techniques and approaches to journalism, including investigative journalism, the use of video and audio, effective use of social media, blogging, fact-checking, analytical reporting, photo-journalism, and citizen journalism
 - Programs that educate journalists and regular citizens about bias in media, how to detect it, how to write objectively, and how to find reliable sources of information
 - Programs that support citizen journalists, networks of bloggers and social media users, online collections of their reports, and distribution or promotion of their reports
 - Programs that offer training and education through Tajikistan's American Spaces on various subjects related to media literacy and journalistic skills
 - Programs that support the technical capacity of media outlets and citizen journalists (ex. bloggers) to reach wider audiences
- **Goal 2:** Expand sources of reliable information that will help Tajik citizens make informed decisions about their society, and increase the reach of these messages
- **Key Beneficiaries:** General population, students and youth, journalists and others working in the sphere of journalism
 - **Ideal partners include but are not limited to:** Non-governmental organizations
 - **Examples include but are not limited to:**
 - Programs that teach media outlets about different business models and techniques for growing their audience and profits
 - Programs that strengthen or establish media outlets that report in areas that lack diverse and reliable sources of information, and among populations that are vulnerable to radicalization and disinformation
 - Programs that distribute reliable information on important subjects to audiences that typically lack access to these sources of information
 - Programs that translate, publish, and distribute international news reports, analytical articles, and other informational and educational content relevant to Tajikistan
 - Programs that study and analyze trends in media consumption, audience size of various media outlets, level of disinformation and misinformation, and other bias in news reporting in Tajikistan
 - Programs that organize and lead educational and analytical presentations, debates, discussions, and seminars on key issues in Tajikistan's news, working closely with American Spaces

Projects NOT authorized for funding by the Democracy Commission include:

- projects that support partisan political activity
- conferences abroad or individual trips abroad
- charitable activity or humanitarian aid
- fundraising campaigns
- art or cultural projects
- medical and scientific research
- projects that duplicate existing projects
- construction projects or projects that consist of infrastructure that is not sustainable
- projects that will last longer than 12 months

Every **Statement of Interest** must:

1. Clearly indicate the grant priority area to which it is being submitted for consideration;
2. Focus on the key audiences specified in the areas (i.e., women, youth, etc.), and note key geographic areas and other indicators of focus populations;
3. Clearly delineate how elements of the program will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant;
4. Identify specific outcomes to be achieved by the end of the grant period;
5. Provide a plan for program outcomes, including social media outreach and monitoring, where applicable; and
6. Provide an approximate funding amount.

All applicants must demonstrate competency to manage all financial and oversight aspects of the project, including participant costs and transparent arrangements of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations, if applicable.

Projects outlined in **Statements of Interest** may include a traditional and/or social media plan for marketing or advertising program activities and outcomes; however, any “branding” or public reporting of the funding source should be carefully coordinated with the U.S. Embassy beforehand.

This funding opportunity does not support the purchase or long-term lease of space or buildings in support of program activities.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement or Grant

Anticipated period of performance: 9-12 months

Number of awards anticipated: 10-20

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: \$10,000

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: \$50,000

The U.S. Embassy Dushanbe Public Affairs Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The Public Affairs Section administers the Democracy Commission Small Grants Program. This program supports the development of Tajikistan's democratic institutions and civil society by competitively awarding small grants to Tajik nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and associations, to nonprofit civil society organizations (CSOs), and to independent local media organizations. State bodies are encouraged to work with NGOs to submit applications.

American or other donor country organizations or individuals are **not eligible** for grants under this program. Current Democracy Commission grant recipients may **not** apply for funding; open grants must be closed before new applications can be considered. The maximum grant award is \$50,000, though the average grant award is less than \$25,000.

Previous grant experience should be documented in the organization's proposal. A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. **Organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.**

Cost Sharing or Matching

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov.

D. STATEMENT OF INTEREST SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Statement of Interest Deadline: All Statements of Interest must be received by **March 31, 2020** at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time. For the purposes of determining if an award is submitted on time, PAS will utilize the time-stamp provided by Grants.gov. This deadline is firm and is not a rolling deadline. If organizations fail to meet the deadline noted above their application will be considered ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

Statements of Interest are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Make sure you read the Frequently Asked Questions. Please contact the Democracy Commission grants team at the U. S. Embassy in Dushanbe if you have any other questions by email:

GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Submissions that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to furnish or comply with the stated requirements will be deemed ineligible.

Content and Form of Statement of Interest Submission

Please ensure:

1. The Statement of Interest clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity;
2. All content is in English;
3. The overall budget estimate is in U.S. dollars;
4. All pages are numbered;
5. All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper; and
6. All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.
7. **Statements of Interest cannot exceed two pages.**

Applicants must submit a Statement of Interest not to exceed 2 pages in English. You may use your own format. All Statements of Interest should address the following areas:

- a. Explain the problem your project will address and why this project is needed
- b. Give a short summary that outlines your proposed project
- c. List your project goal and objectives. The “goal” describes what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- d. Describe a sample project activity and how it will help achieve the objectives.
- e. Describe the expected results of the program.

Application Submission Process: There are two submissions methods available to applicants. Applicants may submit their application using Submission Method A **or** Submission Method B outlined below.

- **Submission Method A:** Submitting all application materials directly to the following email address: GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov. Applicants opting to submit applications via email to GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov **must** include the Funding Opportunity Title and Funding Opportunity Number in the subject line of the email.
- **Submission Method B:** Submitting all application materials through Grants.gov. For those opting to apply through Grants.gov, thorough instructions on the application process are available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or go to <https://www.grants.gov/support.html>. Please note that GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov is unable to assist with technical questions or problems applicants experience with Grants.gov.

Applicants utilizing Grants.gov must register with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission.

There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register:

1. **Step 1:** Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)
 - a. **DUNS application:** Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet, if your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
 - b. **NCAGE application:** Application page here (but need to click magnifying glass and then scroll down to click new registration)
<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>
 - i. Instructions for the NCAGE application process: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf>
 1. For help from within the U.S., call 1-888-227-2423
 2. For help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-961-7766
 - ii. Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code. After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov/>
2. **Step 2:** Once DUNS and NCAGE are obtained, continue to SAM registration on www.SAM.gov
3. **Step 3:** Once SAM registration is confirmed, continue to Grants.gov organization registration <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Organizations must maintain an active SAM registration (www.SAM.gov) with current information at all times during which they have an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Given the volume of applications, review may take up to 90 days, and we are unable to individually confirm receipt of proposals.
4. **Step 4:** Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and be authorized as an AOR by your organization on www.grants.gov

For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your SAM registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your SAM registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Timely receipt requirements and proof of timely submission

If using submission method A:

If the applicant is submitting an application via email to GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov, they can expect a confirmation of receipt from PAS within five days. If the applicant does not receive an email confirmation in that time, they should contact GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov to ensure the proposal was received.

If using submission method B:

All Statements of Interest must be received by the deadline communicated in this NOFO. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number from Grants.gov

with the successful transmission of their application. Applicants should print this receipt and save it as proof of timely submission.

When PAS successfully retrieves the Statement of Interest from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt to the email address of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Proof of timely submission shall be the date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding.

Applicants using dial-up connections should be aware that transmission should take some time before Grants.gov receives it. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission message. The Grants.gov Contact Center reports that some applicants abort the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application. Uploading and transmitting many files, particularly electronic forms with associated XML schemas, will take some time to be

Statements of Interest are due no later than March 31, 2020 (11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern time).

Second Round

Embassy Dushanbe will review all **Statements of Interest** and invite shortlisted projects to submit full grant applications as below:

Technical Requirements for the second round (if the applicant is shortlisted)

The following documents are required:

1. **Mandatory application forms:** Standard Forms 424 are available, along with guidance for completing these forms, at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> under the heading, “SF-424 Family.”
 - a. **SF-424** (*Application for Federal Assistance – organizations*)
 - b. **SF424A** (*Budget Information for Non-Construction programs*)
 - c. **SF424B** (*Assurances for Non-Construction programs*)
2. **Summary Page:** Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, project title, project period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the project.
3. **Proposal (15 pages maximum):** The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.
 - a. **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
 - b. **Introduction to the Organization Applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the project, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies.

- c. **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed project is needed
 - d. **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the project is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
 - e. **Project Activities:** Describe the project activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
 - f. **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate
 - g. **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the project activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events
 - h. **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this project?
 - i. **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees
 - j. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal will outline in detail how the proposal’s activities will advance the program’s goals and objectives (listed above). A strong proposal will include:
 - i. Any outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program. Outcomes could include: change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will know those outcomes are occurring (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.)
 - 1. For example: If the program expects that a teacher-training program will improve the skills of a teacher, a proposal may explain the skills the teacher would gain and plan to perform a pre and post survey that would show a change in understanding due to the program.
 - ii. A schedule of when grant activities will occur (such as participant selection, workshops, travel, lectures, trainings, etc.), and when the grantee will check the grant’s progress to know how it is performing. Results of those checks are expected to be reported in the quarterly reports.
 - iii. A plan to include the grantee’s reflection of how their program, as a whole, contributed to the program’s goals. As applicable, a strong final report would be supported by success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained.
 - k. **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.
4. **Budget Justification Narrative:** Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line item expenditures should be

listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

- a. Publishing short informational publications, manuals and public informational materials are allowable. All publishing should be clearly linked to the project activity, should describe the intended audience, provide a clear understanding of the material's content, how materials will be distributed, and specify who is responsible for the distribution of the materials. The Democracy Commission reserves the right to review and approve all funded publications.
- b. Salaries (including income tax and social deductions), equipment, and other administrative expenses are allowable only as they relate to specific project activities. Salary or honoraria should be listed according to rate of pay and percentage of time spent on program-related activities. While salary expenses are permissible for local personnel, payment of honoraria and other expenses for foreign experts will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Democracy Commission strongly urges applicants to consider utilizing local and regional experts.
- c. Equipment bought with Democracy Commission grant money can only be procured locally. Any request for computer equipment must include the procurement of original, not pirated, software.
- d. Any equipment which is procured grant funds is loaned to the NGO and remains the property of the U.S. Embassy for a minimum of three years. This is to ensure that equipment will not be used for personal matters and that equipment will be returned to the U.S. Embassy should the NGO cease its activities. At the end of project or three years, the Democracy Commission will review the work of the NGO to determine whether 1) the loan will be extended, 2) the equipment will be given permanently to the NGO, or 3) the equipment will be returned to the U.S. Embassy.
- e. Coffee breaks and working lunches only will be considered on case by case basis and should be clearly justified and limited to a maximum of 10% of the total award amount.
- f. Lodging costs should be indicated separately from meal costs related to the project activities.

5. Organization Information

- a. **Applicant Organization Survey:** Applicants must complete and submit the survey (Attachment 1).
- b. A copy of the organization's registration should be provided with the proposal application. U.S.-based organizations should submit a copy of their IRS determination letter. Tajikistan-based organizations should submit a copy of their certificate of registration from the appropriate government organization.

6. Attachments:

- a. 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project
- b. Letters of support should be included for sub-awardees or other partners. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length.

- c. If your organization has a NICRA and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
- d. Official permission letters, if required for project activities

Please note:

1. Other items **NOT** required/requested for submission, but which *may* be requested if your application is approved for funding include:
 - a. Copies of an organization or program audit within the last two (2) years
 - b. Copies of relevant human resources, financial, or procurement policies
 - c. Copies of other relevant organizational policies or documentation that would help the Department determine your organization's capacity to manage a federal grant award overseas.
2. The Embassy reserves the right to request any additional programmatic and/or financial information regarding the proposal.

Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

Funding Restrictions

1. **Construction:** This award does not allow for construction activities or costs.
2. **Pre-award Costs:** Pre-award costs are not an allowable expense for this funding opportunity.
3. **Other Prohibited Expenses:**
 - a. Grants may not cover ongoing salaries, professional fees, or on-going operational expenses (furniture, utilities, communication expenses, office rental, car and building purchase, etc.);
 - b. Grants may not be used for the production or procurement of English-language materials. The Democracy Commission will not fund the publishing of academic theses.
 - c. Democracy Commission funds should not be used to pay for travel to the United States or for travel grants. Projects involving regional travel will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must have a clear justification outlining why the travel is integral to the project.
 - d. Democracy Commission funds cannot be used to provide direct charity or social services to populations.
 - e. Alcohol and entertainment costs are not allowable expenses.
4. **Program Activities:** Activities that are not typically funded include, but are not limited to:
 - a. profit-generating projects;
 - b. scholarships to support educational opportunities or study for individuals*;
 - c. paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
 - d. financial support for fundraising or fund development projects;

- e. projects that are inherently political in nature or that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to an individual or single party in electoral campaigns;
- f. political party and lobbying activities;
- g. projects that support specific religious activities; and,
- h. microloans/microfinance projects, distribution of seed money for enterprises, and legal/land rights-focused programs are not allowable.

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

The U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe has formed a Selection Committee consisting of representatives from U.S. government agencies and community members to review submitted proposals. Once the application process is over, it may take up to three months to complete the review and approval process. The Democracy Commission reserves the right to reject applications for any reason. Each cycle we receive many more qualified proposals than can be funded. While all applications pass through the very competitive selection process, historically only approximately ten percent of applications are funded.

Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

- **Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points:** The program idea should be innovative and well developed, with sufficient detail about how project activities will be carried out. The proposals should demonstrate originality and outline clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.
- **Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 25 points:**
 - The project proposal demonstrates that the organization has sufficient expertise, skills, and human resources to implement the project.
 - The organization demonstrates that it has a clear understanding of the underlying issue that the project will address.
 - The organization demonstrates capacity for successful planning and responsible fiscal management. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.
 - Applicants who have received grant funds previously have been compliant with applicable rules and regulations.
 - Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitae (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Proposed personnel, institutional resources, and partners are adequate and appropriate
- **Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 15 points:** The project plan is well developed, with sufficient detail about how activities will be carried out. The proposal specifies target audiences, participant recruitment, and geographic areas of implementation. The proposal outlines clear, achievable objectives. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline. The project scope is appropriate and clearly defined.

- A media or amplification plan (if appropriate) that shows how the organization will use social or traditional media or otherwise increase the number of people who gain exposure to the issue and knowledge of the activities beyond the core participants.
- **Budget – 10 points:** The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. The budget demonstrates that the organization has devoted time to accurately determine expenses associated with the project instead of providing rough estimates. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation – 15 points:** Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The organization has clearly articulated how it will assess and measure its own performance throughout the project implementation phase using concrete quantitative and qualitative assessment tools.
- **Sustainability – 10 points:** The project proposal describes clearly the approach that will be used to ensure maximum sustainability or advancement of project goals after the end of project activity.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

The Federal government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of the announcement. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received. The U.S. government also reserves the right to make an award in excess of the award ceiling.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Terms and Conditions: Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include: 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, Certifications and Assurances, and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available at:

<https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx>

Reporting

Recipients are required to quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final certified programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period.

All reports are to be submitted electronically.

Awardees that are deemed to be high risk may be required to submit more extensive and frequent reports until their high risk designation has been removed.

The Awardee must also provide the Embassy on an annual basis an inventory of all the U.S. government provided equipment using the SF428 form.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact:

GrantProposalsDushanbe@state.gov

For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

To inquire about the process for obtaining a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) contact Donald Hunter at HunterDS@state.gov.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project, for both program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the project involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the project. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the project activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the project, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the project activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of the modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Branding Requirements: As a condition of receipt of a grant award, all materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under an agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, and backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard, rectangular U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Note: Exceptions to the branding requirement are allowable under certain conditions. If an applicant is notified that their award has been chosen for funding, the Grants Officer will determine, in consultation with the applicant, if an exception is applicable.

Copyrights and Proprietary Information

If any of the information contained in your application is proprietary, please note in the footer of the appropriate pages that the information is Confidential – Proprietary. Applicants should also note what parts of the application, program, concept, etc. are covered by copyright(s), trademark(s), or any other intellectual property rights and provide copies of the relevant documentation to support these copyrights.